

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL 1, 2006 – JUNE 30, 2006

The Planning and Zoning Commission met nine times this quarter. The Commission has already scheduled an extra meeting in July, and will likely meet in August to meet workload demands.

Overall, the Commission acted upon 24 applications this quarter and six application amendments. Of those 24 applications and six amendments, all were approved, except for one application which was withdrawn. Included in that total are the issuance three mandatory referral reports: on the Arts Center lease, the BMW of Darien lease, and on the cell tower lease extension. They also approved the replacement Tokeneke School, a new office building on Tokeneke Road, and additions to the Darien Historical Society. In June, the Commission met informally regarding potential redevelopment of the existing Howard Johnson's property on Ledge Road, a proposed mixed-use development at 1020 Boston Post Road, and potential tenants for the property at 934 Boston Post Road, all three projects in or near downtown.

On July 11, the Commission will meet with the Board of Selectmen regarding parking regulations. On July 18, the continuation of the public hearing on the Darien Library will be held. The Commission will likely make a decision on the Library matter within the upcoming quarter. Also up for review are a number of downtown projects, including the Panera Bread proposal to locate next to the Darien Theater (a public hearing was held on June 27), and three site plan applications related to the Dolcetti and Hutchison properties. A public hearing on those three site plans will be held on July 25. In July or September, the Commission expects to make a decision regarding a number of minor zoning regulation amendments.

The 2006 Town Plan of Conservation & Development was formally adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and took effect on June 25, 2006. The Plan is now at the printer, and it is expected that copies will be available for purchase by the general public within a week. We expect to have the entire document posted on the Town web site in 2-3 days.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) met six times this quarter—two times each month. A total of twenty four applications were acted upon—sixteen were granted; four granted in part/denied in part; three denied; and one withdrawn. Two application amendments were also granted. The ZBA expects to have two meetings in July, and possibly one in August, to address the existing workload.

The Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) met four times this period, and acted upon twenty-seven applications—thirteen in April; five in May; and nine in June. Of those applications: twenty-six were granted; and one was denied. In addition, two application amendments were approved. The Commission also adopted a new, updated Town Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Map. That adopted map is now on the Town web site for public review, and available for review and/or purchase from this office. The EPC has already planned on adding a second August meeting to address the existing workload. Staff continues work on the updating of the wetlands regulations, with further discussion expected to occur in September or October.

The Architectural Review Board met three times this quarter. They reviewed a number of applications for a variety of signs, awnings, and façade changes; new commercial buildings at 151 Boston Post Road, 1003 Boston Post Road, the new Darien Library building; lighting for an

extension of BMW of Darien's parking lot; and an outdoor seating area for a proposed Panera Bread restaurant downtown.

A total of 162 Zoning Permits were processed this quarter. A total of 49 were acted upon in April, 48 in May, and 65 in June. Eleven permits were approved for new single-family residences, and twelve permits approved for swimming pools. Three zoning permits for signs for commercial buildings were also approved. The total number of permits acted upon is an increase of over 5% since last quarter.

Personnel

John Haley was hired as the Department's summer intern, and will work with us in June, July and August. He has been contributing on a number of projects, including State-required wetlands reporting, work on both the annual report and the 2006 Town Plan, preparing mailings, filing, copying, and general research issues. He has been a real asset to this Department, and is providing much-needed assistance to both staff and the general public.